



The Joy of Customer Service Training

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The Joy of Customer Service Training

What a wild concept! How can you get **JOY** out of customer service training? What persons, in their right mind, would want to take on the challenge of training people to be polite, to care about the customer and, yet, be attentive to the needs and values of the employer?

What is Customer Service?

Customer service is what distinguishes the client's opinion of your business. It leaves a far stronger lasting impression than anything else, whether it is a dirty cup in a restaurant that the server immediately apologizes for and replaces or a hair on the floor in the bathroom of a motel room that you wiped up with a tissue and told the front desk about in the morning. The front desk staff notified the housekeeping department of the problem and the head housekeeper came to your room and personally apologized. Now, both of those are nasty, both would make you think twice about returning to that particular establishment...UNLESS it is taken care of by the staff with haste and courtesy. If that is what happened, it is likely that the customer would remember the great service and not the problem and would return to your business in the future.

Therein is one of the benefits of customer service training. It's the responsibility of the management (or owners) of the business to teach their employees the skills necessary to retain the customers. It isn't something that "just comes naturally" to most people.

Each situation and business has its own set of standards and expectations. Does your staff know what yours are? Do you train? Do you think it costs too much money to train? Do you have a Vision Statement and Core Values for your staff to follow?

Does your company depend on customers coming in direct contact with staff? Or are you looking to train your staff to work together with respect and courtesy, as they would the general public? Customer service doesn't apply solely to the person coming in off the street; it affects co-workers too. If you train your staff on good customer service, the same culture will most likely be used among co-workers.

Before you can train your staff, you really need to know what is important to the company, to know what it stands for, what their vision is and what the core values are for the company.

So Where Do You Start?

The first thing you need to do is to believe in yourself. You need to KNOW that you can motivate others to succeed. You need to know what your goals are and what path you need to take to reach the goal.

What is your company culture? Is there any? What is your company Vision? What are the Core Values of the company? If the company has this in written form, read it before you start. Do you agree with them? Is this something you can get excited about and excite others about? If so, you are on your way. If not, perhaps you need to find a different job with a company whose values more closely align with yours.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of books on how to motivate your employees. Most of them are pretty good and have some good activities to use in your training sessions. But to begin with, start out with the simple things like asking your staff to write down one thing they feel is wrong with how things are currently handled. If the staff doesn't believe they will get "in trouble with the boss" for being honest, you will gain valuable insight as to which door to open in training first.

If the staff believes that the management doesn't listen to them or doesn't care about them, then you need to focus on that first. You won't be able to get the staff to treat the customers well if the staff feels they are not important.

Bring in the Owner/Manager to talk to the staff. (Make sure the Owner/Manager knows what you need before you bring them in to talk. Don't spring it on them with a "Hey, Bill (or Beth), I really need you to come in and talk to the staff for a few minutes. They think you don't care about them.")

Encourage the Owner/Manager to acknowledge each division of your company and how important they are to the whole operation. For instance, in a hotel the front desk staff can't sell a dirty room, the housekeeping department doesn't get to clean rooms and make money if the front desk staff isn't able to sell the rooms. Each division is as valuable to the operation of a hotel as the other. Neither can survive without the cooperation and pride of the other. A waitress can't bring food to a customer if the cook doesn't cook it and the dishwasher doesn't have clean dishes for the cook and waitress to use. A sales clerk can't sell a product if the stocker doesn't fill the shelves with product that requires the shipping department and the buyers and so on.

With those three examples in mind, think about your company. Is there truly any job that is "less vital" than the other? Are the President and the Executive Team the only ones that really matter? Is the entry level worker really just a "waste of effort to train"?

If you are a President, member of the Executive Team or Management in any capacity, how likely is it that you know how to make the necessary phone call to sell a product or to set up the IT division and get it completely operational? Can you unclog a toilet or set

up a meeting room? Sure, you may be able to do that, but are you anxious to? Is that what your job description calls for? Is there a better use of your skills and time? If those are responsibilities that you don't want to take on for yourself and yet you need to have someone do them, then isn't it accurate to state that the members of your team that have the responsibility for those duties are important? If they are important, then they need to be trained! Even the janitor comes in contact with other people, their customer service skills need to be sharp too. Who knows, the client you have been trying to get for a long time may just walk in and come in contact with someone that is perceived to be the lowliest member of your team and the impression gained will be what that employee projects to your client. If it's negative toward your company, even if it's a look or by ignoring that client, it will leave a negative impact. Who wants to do business with a company that, upon first impression, tells them that the staff is unhappy or unprofessional? Not me, and I would assume you wouldn't either!

Companies depend on different divisions, different personalities and different responsibilities to accomplish the goals necessary to have a profitable, sustainable business.

So, where do you start? You start at the beginning; you start with looking at your company and determining the needs and special requirements of your staff. You need to care about your staff and fulfilling their training needs; they will then take care of your customers. It's a win-win situation.

Teamwork

In most situations there comes a need for teamwork. One activity that you do with your staff that is not only visual, but also fun. It shows the integration of each member of your staff in the total relationship of the company operation using a ball of string.

Have your staff (and this can be done by a relatively small group or a large group) form a circle. Give one person a ball of string, they must choose another person in the circle, tell the other person what it is that they contribute to the team and then throw the ball of string to that person while holding onto the end of the string. The second person throws the ball (while holding onto the string too) to another person after stating how that person contributes to the team, continue this until every member of the circle has had the ball thrown to them and is holding onto the string. Now, tell them to look at how the string ties all of them together, how one continual flow of string has reinforced the team picture. While this is fun, it also forces the employees to think about how the others in their team contribute to the whole and encourages them to make positive comments about the work of a co-worker.

Teamwork doesn't just happen. It takes effort, constant training, sharing information, encouragement, recognition and willingness to help each other out. The critical component of you as a trainer is to do all of the above without becoming sanctimonious, arrogant, or critical of others. Think that's easy? It's not. Training is hard work, but it's

worth it when you see the development of the culture of the company turn from people working for a paycheck to people truly caring about the company and how it is doing.

Training Needs

In visiting with a customer service representative of a large cable provider I asked him what type of training his department received and whether they get continual training or once their “initial” training is completed they were left on their own to survive. His response was they get a week of group training, then a week of one on one training on the phones and if they want training after that they can take it and receive pay increases accordingly. When asked if there was any motivational training or teamwork training, his response was no. When asked if that was something that would make his job easier or more enjoyable, he said definitely. He said that although he knows his job and tries to do his best it would be better if there was staff group training on an ongoing basis.

Another very large international discount chain used to have the reputation of great motivational training and constant encouragement of their employees to provide excellent customer service. They had trainers that would come to the stores a couple of time a year, hold great training sessions - - occasionally off the premises, and get all the employees fired up about customer service. They excelled in providing good customer service; comments were always about how well the customer was treated.

The company decided, apparently, that the cost of training was too high and discontinued the frequency of training. Customer service has become a thing of the past; the staff doesn't pay attention to the customer. When asked for help it seems to be a major inconvenience for the staff to assist a customer and the complaints from the customers has sky rocketed.

So, is the cost of paying your staff for an hour or two of training a few times a year really too high? Does it really impact your bottom line negatively? Absolutely not! What training does is to drive revenue. It brings customers back because they are well-treated and understand that they matter. They spend more money and encourage friends and family to come to the business, drives up the bottom line. People who are well treated tell friends and family. People that are NOT well treated tell everyone they know.

It is much less costly to keep a satisfied client coming back than it is to spend the money to attract new (replacement) clients. Satisfied clients tell others about your great service, super “sales,” beautiful facilities, comfort of doing business with you, and the satisfaction of feeling important. Even if you don't have the product or service they are looking for, treat the client/customer with respect and courtesy, they will tell others of their positive experience. Although you may not have generated any income from that particular client/customer, they will talk about their experience with others that could lead to another person coming to your business to buy the service/product you do have to offer.

So, is training important? Look at your bottom line. Can it be increased? Would your investors or your own bank account be happy with more money? If so, TRAIN your staff! Make them part of the process, give them information to work with and give them incentives for doing a great job.

Incentives DO NOT need to be cash-based. More often than not, employees just want a thank you from their boss. They want a compliment on something they have done. It could be great if you choose to do a tangible incentive. But along with that make sure that you, as the Owner/Manager, tell the person "THANK YOU." Just think about yourself. Do you appreciate it when a person tells you that you have done a good job or says thank you to you? Of course you do. So does your staff. Don't wait for the client/customer to provide that positive feedback. Be the first to compliment them or thank them. They will work much harder to achieve the goals that have been set, to do a great job and to pass on what a super company you have to those they know if they feel valued.

Let's look at something out of the common customer-based business and see if training in customer service could help them. How about a law office? There are times in life that most people need to contact an attorney for something major or for something as basic as having a will prepared. Again, the first thing you need to do is review your personal Vision Statement and your personal Core Values. Get grounded. Get refreshed in the reason that you do what it is that you do!!

The important thing to remember is *the value of treating the client as an important person a person of value*. Knowing that often times the attorney is faced with someone that is less than appealing may result in the receptionist or attorney becoming harsh in the treatment of clients. The attorney usually has a pretty full schedule; feeling rushed in his/her business life it gets forgotten that the person that has come in to see the attorney needs his/her full attention. The person that has come to see them is there for a reason that is critical to them (even if it is not to the attorney). With customer service training the attorney or receptionist will be mentally prepared to treat the client with respect and courtesy. It will be a natural, ingrained behavioral pattern. The result is there will be less stress for all concerned. Even if the client is one that is obnoxious, angry, flustered, panicked or any number of other emotional states, it will calm everyone down if the client is treated with calmness and attention. It will assist in getting the information dispersed and the decisions that need to be made done in a more time efficient manner than if everyone is flustered or hurried.

Take the time to train your staff and yourself. If you need to, bring in an outside trainer. It doesn't have to be expensive but it does need to be done. It will only benefit you and your business.

Outside Trainers:

Occasionally, even if you have an in-house trainer, it is good to bring in someone from the “outside.” It brings a fresh face into the mix. Although the information provided may be the same information you have been delivering, it will be perceived differently. It may well get the attention or understanding of a staff member that has missed the message when it has been delivered by you. Sometimes the old saying “An expert is someone from 50 miles away” is true. Not because they know more, teach better or train better, but because they are a new face that draws attention from the staff.

Talk to others in your industry to see who they use for training. Perhaps they have had a good experience with a certain person. It may be that you will be interested in contacting that person to come to do training in your business. Perhaps it is someone from another type of business in your area that has been successful with his/her business. Visit with that person; see if there is a message they could pass on that would energize your staff. You might be able to do a trade with the other business, you bring their person into your business and you go to theirs. This could certainly be good for both of you!

Let’s say that your business is office equipment sales. You have a staff that you train regularly but you see that the energy is less than it has been in the past. Bring in someone from another field of sales, perhaps a successful car salesperson, to share their thoughts and techniques with your staff. There may be something new for your staff to “grab a hold” of that will assist them in achieving the goals that have been set. Sales people that do not have good customer service skills don’t last long, particularly if they are part of a commission- based staff. If the customer is treated poorly, they won’t buy and will tell their friends and family how awful the sales person is which means the sales person will be gone due to lack of sales. As a Manager/Owner you can’t afford to have that type of salesperson working for you, the lost client is lost revenue. Had the salesperson been better trained, evaluated and observed, the chances of failure would have been greatly reduced and your revenue more secure.

Review your business, be honest with what you are weak in and address those problems. If you deal with people, you need to remember “Customer Service is the **ONLY** differentiator in business.” If you think to be competitive with price, think again. Your price is just too easily matched by your competitors. Unless your product or service is so unique that there is **NO** competition and people **HAVE** to have your product or service so they have **NO CHOICE** but to come to you, it is imperative that you provide good customer service. If your customer service is bad, the client/customer will definitely find another supplier. They will find someone that treats them well and appreciates the fact they chose to do business at your competition. Don’t let that happen to you, train your staff, praise your staff for a job well done, be liberal with your compliments and reap the economic returns.

Challenges Faced by Staff Relating to Customer Service

If you give serious consideration to what challenges are faced by your staff relating to customer service, you will probably come up with at least these six areas.

- 1.) Simultaneously managing the customer experience and the requirements of the company.
- 2.) Keeping on top of the new programs, products or services the company is offering to its customers.
- 3.) Encountering the angry customer when things don't go the way the customer believes it should.
- 4.) Time management.
- 5.) Coordinating the work load with other staff to make sure the customer needs are met.
- 6.) Determining the correct solution when what the customer wants and what the company is able to offer conflict with each other.

Manager Challenges

When you are working with the management team to prepare them for their roll in leadership, the challenges will be different then those facing the other staff members. Some of these challenges are:

- 1.) Constantly training new staff due to turnover.
- 2.) Maintaining a positive attitude toward both the staff and the customer.
- 3.) Managing staffing and turnover to maintain a high quality of service and productivity while staying in the budget set by the company.
- 4.) Teaching both the people skills and the technology skills to enable your staff to be proficient at their job.
- 5.) Being able to work with colleagues in many different functional areas to assure the best customer service possible.
- 6.) Training, encouraging and living up to the core values and mission of the company.

Each of these issues requires special skills which need to be provided to the staff and management by training. They are not intuitive for many people; if they don't know what is expected or required there is no way for them to perform their job correctly. Without training the employee and employer will suffer the consequences of poor customer service leading to loss in revenue due to loss of business due to dissatisfied customers.

Who is It Most Important to Motivate First?

As a trainer, the first person you need to motivate is yourself. If you aren't motivated don't believe in what you are training, don't believe in the values of the company there is no way you can train others to believe in the value, or be excited about working for the company! Motivation occurs from the inside out, it radiates from you IF you believe what you are teaching.

Don't think that you can fool your staff; people's insides come equipped with an infallible phony-detection system that will read "fake" like a neon light flashing on a dark night. Be genuinely excited about your team, be proud of the work they do regardless of the type of job it is. You need to value the teams contribution to the success of the company. This doesn't mean that you tell them how great they are in a staff meeting and then ignore them or have a less than enthusiastic attitude toward them everywhere else. It means the trainer must always be training, encouraging, supportive and motivated

When you consistently practice the skills you are training, such as kindness, listening, empathy, gratitude, responsibility and persuasion, you will apply them to all aspects of your life. It won't be forced, it won't be fake, it will be real. It will be part of you.

Applying these traits to your everyday life will help you make friends more easily. It will make life with your family even more wonderful. They will reciprocate making your life far more enjoyable for everyone. People who are happy in what they do and how they feel have strong relationships with friends and family as well as co-workers. Isn't that the goal of everyone?

Following are suggestions for you, the Trainer. Although applicable for the trainee too, it is important that the trainer remember and practice the following yourself.

Positive Attitude Tips

Let go of the negative. Whether it is directed at yourself or at others, when you begin to think or say negative things, Stop! It will only hurt you and those around you. Don't waste your time or energy on the negatives.

Ask yourself if "this is really important," keep your life in perspective. Don't let the little things take over your life.

You can't always control what happens but you can control how you react. Be in control of your emotions.

Don't get mad at staff or customers. No one makes you mad; it's a choice you make. So choose to be happy, have a positive attitude.

If those around you are in “bad moods,” remove yourself from the group. Moods are contagious, just like the flu or a cold. Choose to infect those around you with positive attitudes and a good mood.

Listening Skills – How are yours?

The best way to find out what a person wants is to listen. If you are trying to sell something or to train someone in a skill they don’t currently possess, listen to what they are telling you. They need to “explain” what they don’t understand. At that point you know where to go with the training.

Focus on the message. Pay attention to what the person is trying to say, not how it is said. Pick out the true message.

Avoid distractions. Remove items that keep you from focusing on the speaker. If necessary, go to a quiet area, out of the normal flow of people so you can pay particular attention to what the speaker is saying.

Remember that listening does not mean you need to respond. There are many times when a staff member just needs to be heard, he/she is not looking for a solution or help, they just want to be heard.

Don’t interrupt. You won’t hear what the speaker is saying or grasp the message if you are focusing on what you are going to say to them.

Customers

Remember that it costs six times as much to obtain a new customer than it does to retain the current one; sometimes it’s even more. Solve the customers’ problem, and retain them it’s the best way to save money and satisfy your customer.

Complaints are a good thing. Really?? Of course! Only four percent of upset customers complain, the other ninety-six don’t say a thing; they leave and never come back. A complaint gives you the opportunity to resolve the situation.

The customer is not always right, but they are always the customer so treat them well. Do the best job possible to resolve any issues.

Don’t solve the problem right away. Often the customer’s initial objective is to “vent” and express emotion. Listen first, then offer solutions. If you interrupt too soon, the person won’t be ready to listen or to accept your resolutions.

If you can’t resolve the customer’s complaint, volunteer to get someone who can. Don’t wait for the customer to get angrier and demand to see the manager. Be proactive, take

control of the situation. Be polite when informing the customer that you will get someone to assist and then make sure you tell the manager what the problem seems to be so there is a chance to resolve the problem without being blindsided.

Offer alternatives. Instead of telling the customer that the only thing you can do is ----, give them options. The customer may not be thrilled with the selections, but at least they get to make a choice which gives them a degree of satisfaction.

Dealing with Unrealistic Customers

There are times when a customer is unrealistic or so upset that nothing would satisfy them. It happens; try some of the following suggestions to reduce the level of anger.

Cooperation

Try to find one area that you might have in common. You might ask” “I have an idea. Would you like to hear about it?” (No, this is not where you tell them to grow up or take a hike!) The main idea is to get them to agree with you on something neutral.

Ask What the Customer Wants

By asking the customer what they want, forces them to verbalize the request (demand). This allows you the opportunity to come up with a more acceptable solution. Once you know what is wanted, you can determine the appropriate course of action. If what they ask isn't reasonable, you have the opportunity to offer other solutions.

Don't Assume Anything

If you ask the customer to explain why they think or feel the way they do, they will more than likely lower their defenses and become less aggressive in their comments and behavior. Sometimes playing “dumb” is the correct avenue to take. Don't assume you know anything, let them explain.

Manage Expectations

State what it is that you can and cannot do for the customer; this allows you to start managing the customer's expectations. Be sure to tell them both what you can and cannot do so they understand the parameters.

Get the Customer Involved in Action

Learn to agree on small things. Ask them to hand you something on the desk or counter, like a pen or paperclip. When they hand it to you, be nice and say thank you. Then make another request and thank them again. By the third time of their “assisting,” you they will probably be less hostile and willing to work with you to find a solution.

The Worst Kind of Customer

All of you have probably come in contact with the customer that thinks they know everything. They are right, regardless of the facts. These delightful people can make your life miserable for the time they are facing you. They truly don't want a solution; they just want to be right. There isn't much you can do about a situation like that except to remember to be polite and listen. Eventually they will run out of words. Since they don't want or expect a solution, don't offer one. Remember; don't worry about the petty things!

There are also those that demand to see the boss. They act as though you do not exist and if you do, you have no power to solve their problem. In many instances this is a situation that doesn't require you to “get the boss.” It requires you to take control of the conversation, tell them you have the authority to handle the problem and ask them to state what it is they want and why.

Don't be bullied. The greatest joy for a demanding customer is for them to have the customer service representative cower before them. Don't give them the satisfaction. You have been trained in your job. You know how to handle it. You know what you can and what you cannot do. Only if it gets out of control do you need to get your boss. If that is the case then by all means do it. But take this opportunity to learn, watch how your boss handles the customer and next time you will have a better idea of what you can do. Treat it as a training opportunity, not a weakness on your part.

Mr. Number One is another customer you have probably encountered. They expect you to leave everyone else and help them first. They continually call you or come up to the counter and remind you they are waiting. Take control of this by telling them how long you expect their wait will be, whether it is 5 minutes or 2 hours before they will receive a callback. Thank them for their cooperation; assure them they will be taken care of as quickly as possible.

If you have a customer that you just cannot satisfy, and you can't please them regardless of what you do, then get rid of them. They take more time and cost you more than they are worth. Focus on those customers that are “good customers” and your overall profits will increase. Sometimes the best solution is to let someone leave, cut your losses and move on.

Capitalize on Ideas

The trainer doesn't need to come up with all the ideas by themselves. Get the different members of your teams together and brainstorm how they can improve their customer service. Each member will probably have something to contribute. Take those which are good and capitalize on them. By getting your team involved, by listening to them, they will take a greater share of ownership in their job and have more pride in how well they perform.

Ask the Customer

Ask the customer what they would like to see at your business. Perhaps it is something that will work for you and make the customers feel good about helping. You don't have to implement every idea, but out of those that are given, you may find one that will help you drive more revenue to your bottom line.

A Smile and Acknowledgement are Priceless

By smiling at the customer you let them know you are glad they are there. When you compound that with using their name (gotten off their credit card when paying for a purchase) you give them another sense of being valued. If it is a customer that you do not know, smile and welcome them to your business. Common sense things like this will make the customers return and bring their friends once again driving up the revenue of your business.

Under-Promise and Over-Deliver

How many times have you heard this? The fact of the matter is that it is true. Don't promise things that you can't deliver but if the opportunity arises to provide a little extra, do it. This will capture the customers' attention and have them returning whenever they need the product or service you supply.

How to Handle Someone with an Accent

If you have a customer that you are having difficulty understanding due to an accent you are unfamiliar with, take a breath and follow these simple suggestions. Speak as clearly and distinctly as possible. Don't mumble, swallow syllables or omit consonants and vowels. Speak a little slower than normal but don't act like you are speaking to someone with little or no intelligence.

Don't shout. Shouting won't make either of you understand the other better; it will just add frustration to the situation. Make sure you smile, put the customer at ease. You will

be amazed at how much you can communicate with hand and body motions which may help to clarify some things.

Don't use slang or industry jargon. If the customer doesn't speak English as their first language, the slang will just make it more difficult to communicate. Industry jargon should only be used with those in your business; the rest of the world probably doesn't understand or know what you mean.

Be patient with those that don't speak English as their first language. Take a moment to think about what you want to say and then say it slowly. Remember the day may come when the rolls are reversed and you will want to be treated with respect and patience too.

Stress Relievers

Laughter is the number one stress reliever. Make sure you include the opportunity for laughter in your training sessions. Spend some time searching for news headlines (or church bulletins or any other publication) that has headlines where it is funny. For instance:

- "Statistics show that teen pregnancy drops off significantly after age 25."
- "Specialist: Electric Chair Can Be 'Extremely Painful'"

Have some of these to both read to your staff during training or to have different staff members read to the others. The exercise will bring laughs and relieve stress.

Learn to laugh at yourself. Be professional and take your job seriously, just don't take yourself too seriously! Have the staff tell something that they have done that they find funny now but at the time it happened probably didn't see much humor in it. Perhaps it's a housekeeper that walked in on a couple in a pose that wasn't necessarily meant for others to see, something like that. Not exactly funny at the time but it certainly might bring out a good laugh later.

Have your staff sit in a circle and laugh. That's it, just laugh. You will hear all kinds of laughs, some loud, some really soft, some shy, some giggles and some will resist the whole exercise. Once it starts you will find it is contagious and soon will be real. It may take a couple of minutes, but it will happen.

Look for the humor in situations, even those with the grumpy customer (after they leave, please).

Exercise relieves stress, even if it is only stretching or walking down the hallway. Encourage your staff to walk, whenever they can, to get some exercise and relieve stress. Maybe it requires them to walk to another person's desk to ask a question rather than email them. Those few steps could be the time they need to regroup and relax a little.

Yoga is another form of stress relieving. Here is a suggestion for one type of exercise that will help. You may want to suggest that your staff check with their own doctor before beginning any exercise program, even yoga. This isn't something that you are going to want to have your staff do when they are in dress cloths but it is a suggestion you can give them to use at home or in a group when they are in very casual clothing. If you plan to have them do any of these exercises during the training session you are going to want to tell them a couple of days in advance so they can bring cloths to change into prior to the training session. They shouldn't get a sweaty and nasty doing these so they can change back into their other cloths if the training is during the work day when they have to return to their duties rather than getting off work.

Not only will this help your staff relax but it will certainly bring giggles from everyone as they try these.

Supine Breathing

Lie on the floor with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Place one hand on your lower belly and inhale, concentrating on expanding through the ribcage and feeling your fingers separate. Exhale and press the bellybutton towards the spine and 'closing' the ribs. Keep the breath flowing and relax the tension in your shoulders and face. Repeat for 4-6 breaths.

Here is a couple more for you to teach them.

Reach for the Stars

Stand up with toes together, heels apart. Inhale and sweep the arms up overhead. Exhale and fall forward, (bend knees if you need to). Place the hands on the floor, your ankles or shins. Inhale and look up, pulling your back up until it's flat. Exhale and fall forward. Inhale and sweep the arms up as you come back to standing position. Exhale and take the arms down. Repeat this series 4 times

Back Stretch

Lie on your side with knees bent and hips, knees and ankles stacked. Stretch the bottom arm straight out and rest top arm on top, palms together. Keeping your hips stacked and abs engaged, draw the top arm across your body (fingertips trailing the body) and out to the other side. Feel a gentle stretch in your back. Draw the arm back in, stretching over the bottom arm and repeat 3 times before switching sides.

Meditation Stress Relief

Meditation stress relief is breathing. Yes, it's that basic. If you focus on the breathing, truly focus, you will find yourself letting the stress go. Although this is basic and really easy, it is something that most people don't give thought to or take the time to do. Teach the staff about focusing completely on breathing. This helps to take the mind away from the "mind clutter" that constantly tries to invade the mind. This practice will help eliminate feelings of stress and will lead to a time of calm. This can be done at the

employees' desk, during break or when they are at home. The result is less stress and a happier employee.

Training Activities

For ideas on training activities please order my book listing different activities for your staff to use.